

the truth about the possession of weapons of mass destruction by the regime of Saddam Hussein. Again, now we know very clearly that that was not the case and that the administration knew it was not the case.

Most recently we have the report from the outgoing head of the American weapons inspection team in Iraq, David Kay. David Kay has now completed his report as he retires from that position, and he has said to us very, very clearly in that report that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, no chemical or biological weapons; that the biological and chemical weapons that were there, many of them were destroyed in the first Gulf War in 1991 and the rest were discovered and destroyed by the ongoing United Nations weapons inspection program.

We also have information from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which has done a very comprehensive study of the issue of so-called weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has set forth in a very detailed report that there were no weapons of mass destruction held by the Saddam Hussein regime not since the end of the first Gulf War, and shortly thereafter they were destroyed as a result of weapons inspection program, the U.N. weapons inspection program.

Again, another clear indication that the premise that was laid forth by the administration to this Congress in order to get a resolution passed authorizing the carrying out of that war was false. It was fabricated. And this Congress was misled.

That leaves us with the very serious problem of finding out why that was done and who was responsible for doing it. That is important because of the situation we currently find ourselves in in Iraq, including the situation we find ourselves in with regard to the war on terrorism.

Our attention has been diverted away from al Qaeda and away from the war on terrorism. And we find ourselves in Iraq in a war that has already cost more than 500 American lives. The lives of more than 500 American servicemen and -women have been lost. Another more than 2,500 American servicemen and -women have been seriously wounded, all on the basis of pretense.

Therefore, we must conduct a complete and thorough investigation as to what happened, and that investigation must commence immediately.

WE NEED MORE MILITARY END STRENGTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, last year I stood in this well and called on my colleagues to support an increase in

the Nation's military end strength, the number of people in our uniformed services. I am pleased that my colleagues rose to the challenge and recognized the increased pressures that have been placed on our servicemembers. As a result, Congress last year authorized an increase in end strength of 2,400 soldiers for the Army and 300 airmen for the Air Force.

Unfortunately, this increase is just a small down payment on what the services, particularly the Army, need in order to meet today's increased operational tempo. Nearly a decade ago, Congress heard from the Army leadership about the need for an increase in end strength. The then Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, General Ted Stroup, testified before the Committee on Armed Services that the Army needed 25,000 more soldiers to meet ongoing operational needs. Our ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have only made the need for additional troops more imperative. I think we need an additional 40,000-person end strength increase in the Army alone, not to mention the other services.

Many servicemembers who were sent to Afghanistan to search for Osama bin Laden and defeat the al Qaeda went home after their tours only to be told to pack their bags because they were going to Iraq for a year. Brigades from the 10th Mountain Division and from the 101st Airborne Division were sent to Afghanistan. They returned home for a relatively short duration, and then they were sent to Iraq to prosecute Operation Iraqi Freedom. If we continue these back-to-back deployments, we will literally break the force. That is something we as a Nation can ill afford to let happen.

And now our military is about to embark on the largest troop rotation in the history of our country. I wish I could say that the replacement troops will be fresh, but the hard truth is that many of them will be returning to Iraq for consecutive tours. If we had enough people in the military, back-to-back tours in Iraq would not be necessary. It is important for everyone to understand that in the new force rotation into Iraq, National Guardsmen and Reservists will comprise about 40 percent of the force there.

We are using the National Guard and Reserve as never before, and we have to be careful not to put such strains on these citizen soldiers that they leave in droves or that recruiting suffers.

I was in Missouri recently and met with one wife of a National Guardsman now serving in Iraq. She told me when her husband returns from overseas he will be getting out of the National Guard and as many as one-third of folks in her husband's unit will be too.

This may be anecdotal evidence of what is going on in our Reserve components, but it is certainly cause for concern. The increased demands being placed upon our troops in uniform call into question the ability of our forces to meet its commitments in other

parts of the world. If conflict erupted on the Korean peninsula while these brigades are in southwest Asia, our ability to respond quickly would likely be compromised.

Recently, Lieutenant General John Riggs, a senior Army officer, stated that the Army must be substantially increased to meet its global commitments. Yet the Secretary of Defense continues to maintain that the services have enough end strength already to meet their responsibilities and that the increased demands on the troops is only a spike or temporary increase. As a result, my expectation is that the President's budget will not include any permanent end strength increase but will permit only temporary overages associated with our current deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Department of Defense believes that additional servicemembers are not needed because we proved that our troops can vastly overpower an enemy with speed agility and power in war. The problem is that we are no longer in that type of war. We are rebuilding a Nation from the ground up. That kind of undertaking takes people. And right now we simply do not have enough.

There is simply no substitute for having boots on the ground. To get the job done right I am pleased that a number of my colleagues have recognized the importance of increasing end strength. A number of them have written to the President and the Secretary of Defense calling for an increase in end strength. Others like the gentleman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) have introduced legislation to this effect.

We must, we can, and we will in this Congress pass an authorization bill authorizing for appropriation additional end strength for the United States Army as well as the other services.

FULL DISCLOSURE FOR CLAIM OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION BY IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me first of all associate myself with the very thoughtful message of the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) in terms of his very plain-talking message about our military.

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The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and I had the pleasure of visiting a number of them most recently in Iraq and I think a strong debate on this question will be important. Many people believe that those of us who have a difference of opinion for or against the war or for or against the approach that the war took, do not have a total agreement on the necessity of strengthening the young men and women who are in our Armed

Forces. So I look forward to debating this very thoughtful presentation and associate myself with his remarks and the legislative initiatives; and I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for his leadership.

Let me say that I also associate myself with the gentleman's remarks as it relates to the toughness, as it relates to the battle of our Reserve troops and others who have offered their service for a number of years and have been called to duty; and many of them are not able to determine whether they will be in for 6 months or for a year or 18 months or 2 years.

We certainly have the protection of their jobs, but in many instances we are still having disagreements or having to advocate for our reservists to their various employers, some of whom are concerned or unsteady about keeping the reservists' jobs for them and, therefore, certainly undermining the family unit and the ability of that reservist to provide income and support for his or her family.

I happen to be a supporter of the legislation that would allow reservists to retire at 55, just as we allow the active military to retire at 55. It seems unlikely that we would lengthen the time of service for reservists who are apt to be called into battle at any moment. We have lost lives of those who are reservists in Iraq. The numbers are mounting, and they are on the front line.

When I went to Iraq, there were many who were skilled in many other aspects other than combat or police work; and lo and behold, they were being used for service that they were not trained for. So I associate myself with those remarks and certainly support the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) for his efforts in support of our veterans, because we have long been overdue in the full support of our veterans who are willing to give their full measure. And as they are able to come back to our communities, the very fact that they are willing to give the ultimate sacrifice, we should make good on our promise, which is to continue to provide them with benefits on a continuous basis.

Let me also add my congratulations to the veterans hospital that is in my district. We just added the Fischer House. Congratulations to the Fischer family and thank them for their support and all the leaders in Texas that helped bring about this new Fischer House in one of the largest veterans hospitals in our State. And that is, of course, a facility for the families who have come for the long-term wounded to be able to stay at a place of comfort without, if you will, providing an unnecessary financial burden when they are already suffering from the ills of their loved one, whether they are wounded by way of their service in Iraq or suffering with other conditions.

So I am very grateful to our community leaders who helped bring the Fischer House about in my congress-

sional district and commit myself to continue to work with them.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we bring sunlight where sunlight is needed, and today and in the weeks and months to come I am going to take my place on this floor and remind this Congress of its constitutional responsibility. And, in fact, I am going to take off and challenge anyone, first, take off any discussion of a partisan hat and challenge anyone that wishes to make this a partisan issue each step of the way, because I believe that this is so devastating and so much a challenge to the constitutional integrity of this Nation.

And, more importantly, in this Congress I believe that we must shed ourselves and step away from anyone declaring this to be partisan or anyone suggesting it is partisan, because once you begin the partisan debate, I know what happens: You immediately cease any sort of true effort for the Speaker of this House to address the responsibilities of this Congress, and that is to thoroughly investigate Dr. David Kay's report that we have heard over the last few days and that of the Carnegie Institute regarding weapons of mass destruction.

Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, that I intend to call for full congressional hearings, public hearings, not just in the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the Select Committee on Homeland Security, and the Committee on the Judiciary, to ensure that we review the questions that David Kay has raised the lack of evidence and intelligence for weapons of mass destruction and the representation, as I close, Mr. Speaker, to the Congress and the American people by this administration that we must go to war on that basis.

Full congressional hearings, no independent commission, full congressional hearings.

SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEUGEBAUER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, last week during the State of the Union address President Bush spoke to us about the Iraqi War and described how the Kay report, the Dr. David Kay report, indicated dozens of instances of what the President called weapons of mass destruction-related program activities.

Now, I am not sure what a weapons of mass destruction-related program activity is, but I do know what it is not. It is not a weapon of mass destruction, because we have not found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. And, in fact, David Kay himself has said so. He has resigned his position as the United States Chief Weapons Inspector in Iraq, working for the CIA.

He has stated that in his opinion, Iraq does not have stockpiles of chem-

ical weapons of mass destruction or biological weapons of mass destruction, that Iraq does not have nuclear weapons, and any nuclear program was rudimentary in nature, according to Dr. Kay. He feels that these stockpiles do not exist now and did not exist before we went to war with Iraq in March of 2003.

Now, this is a startling conclusion from our Chief Weapons Inspector because it is so different from what the Bush administration told us in the fall of 2002 in the run-up to the congressional vote of whether or not to give congressional authority to the President to use military authority to deal with what was described as the imminent threat to peace, to regional peace and world peace and to the United States, the imminent threat of the use of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Speaker, I voted to give the President that authority based upon the representations of the administration because I wanted to disarm Saddam Hussein of those weapons of mass destruction. Now, we have finally captured Saddam Hussein, and I am glad that we have; I am glad he is out of power. I believe both Iraq and America are better off now that he is in custody. But, Mr. Speaker, we have not found those weapons of mass destruction; and we now have a report from Dr. Kay that those weapons of mass destruction did not exist and they do not exist today.

Hussein had weapons of mass destruction in the 1980s. We know that because he used them in murderous ways against his own citizens, the Kurds in northern Iraq, and he used them to murder tens of thousands of Iranian citizens. But the issue is not what he had in the 1980s. The issue is whether he had such stockpiles in 2002 and 2003. We were told with complete certainty by the President, by the Vice President, I was told with 20 other Members of the House in a briefing in the White House on October 2, 2002, by Condoleezza Rice and George Tenet that there was complete certainty that Iraq possessed these weapons of mass destruction. And based upon those representations, I voted with many of my colleagues to give the President that war authority.

Now, it is now clear that there were half-truths and deceptions from the administration as well as mistakes from the Intelligence Community. And I stand here tonight to call for an independent investigation, an independent review, of both the work product of the Intelligence Community of the United States and the work of the administration policymakers that stated with such clarity that we faced an imminent threat from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Clearly the American people were misled. Clearly the Congress was misled. I was misled by the Bush administration and by the United States intelligence agencies.

The President and the Vice President continue to want the American people